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Governor Doyle Assesses Storm Damage, Issues State of Emergency for 11 Counties

Surveys Damage in Waupun, Markesan, Easton, and New Chester Areas

WAUPUN – Governor Jim Doyle today surveyed damage from severe weather that swept across portions of Wisconsin last night and issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency in 11 Wisconsin counties affected by storms and tornado touchdowns. Executive Order #61 adds the following 11 counties to an existing State of Emergency declaration already in effect because of floods last month: Adams, Jackson, Juneau, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Outagamie, Portage, Sauk, Waupaca, and Waushara.

"Last night's storms clearly took a significant toll on many Wisconsin communities, including the tragic death of one of our citizens," Governor Doyle said. "We will move quickly to seek federal disaster assistance to help Wisconsin communities as well as the families whose lives have been upended by these storms."

Governor Doyle viewed storm damage in the Waupun and Markesan areas from a Wisconsin National Guard helicopter, and was joined by Major General Al Wilkening of the Wisconsin National Guard and Ed Gleason of Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM). The Governor also met with local officials at a command post established at the Waupun Police and Fire Department on Main Street in Waupun, and viewed damage on the ground. Additionally, Governor Doyle did an aerial survey of storm damage in the Adams County towns of Easton and New Chester.

Wisconsin Emergency Management's initial assessments show that many counties reported downed trees and power lines. At this time, 10 counties have reported property damage and some reports of injuries and one fatality. The assessment shows Adams County to be most affected by the storms, with reports of personal injury and property damage. All main highways and roads in Adams County were open by noon on Thursday.

Earlier this month, Governor Doyle declared a State of Emergency in 12 Wisconsin counties that received damage from heavy rains and flooding that began May 19. Those counties are: Clark, Columbia, Crawford, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green Lake, Jefferson, Kenosha, Ozaukee, Vernon, and Winnebago.

Today, Governor Doyle also directed Wisconsin Emergency Management to request that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) begin Preliminary Damage Assessments for the private sector in 16 counties that have been affected by either previous flooding damage or last night's storms. Those counties are Adams, Clark, Crawford, Grant, Green Lake, Jackson, Juneau, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Outagamie, Portage, Sauk, Vernon, Waupaca, and Waushara.

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The Governor took this action as the first step to make federal assistance available to individuals and businesses that sustained damages from these storms beginning May 19.

Additionally, the Governor will request that FEMA add Jackson, Juneau, and Marquette counties to the declaration for public assistance to respond to damage to public infrastructure (roads, bridges, and dams). Preliminary Damage Assessments completed for these three counties are complete and show that losses sustained by local governments meet the required FEMA threshold to trigger aid to rebuild infrastructure.

Governor Doyle urged individuals and businesses affected by flooding and Wednesday's storms to contact their local county emergency management directors. For questions about FEMA assistance, people can call 1-800-621-3362. As of June 19, federal assistance to individuals is available for residents in Columbia, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha, Ozaukee and Winnebago counties. Agricultural producers should contact their local Farm Service Agency office for information.